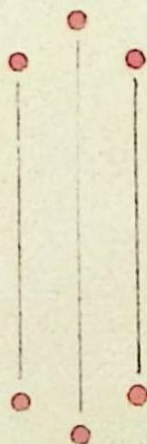


ALL INDIA ORIENTAL CONFERENCE

XXXI SESSION

JAIPUR

[October 28-30, 1982]



ADDRESS

BY

General President

GAURINATH SASTRI

Beloved delegates,

Let me welcome you to this historic pink city of Rajsthan on the occasion of the XXXIst session of All India Oriental Conference. It will be in the fitness of things to recall to-day the necessity and utility of a conference of this kind which the pioneer organisers felt that they could hardly be emphasised. It was resolved by the Executive Board of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute that a conference of Orientalists of India, Burma and Ceylon should be organised. It was also felt desirable that, if possible, the first conference should be held in the month of May, 1919. In a conference of Orientalists summoned at Simla by Sir Harcourt Butler in July 1911 Dr Vogel had laid down before the scholars assembled a plan for holding a conference of Orientalists in India. The first oriental conference, however, met on the 5th of November, 1919 at Poona in a pandal erected specially in front of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.

The papers sent by the scholars on that occasion numbered about 120 and they dealt with all the different branches of oriental learning, such as History, Inscription Reading, Philosophy, Philology—Vedic and Prakritic, Neumismatics and several other subjects. The Universities of Calcutta, Bombay, Punjab, Allahabad and Mysore and the Council of Post-Graduate Teaching at Calcutta sent a score of delegates. About 50 delegates came from different learned associations and institutions. Delegates came from different parts of India, from such distant places as

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Kashmir and Ceylon. As the number of papers was large for one session the idea of holding sectional meetings was mooted. Sir Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar was selected as the first President of the Conference but it was unfortunate that he could not read his address due to failing health. It is known to the academic world that Sir R. G. Bhandarkar's stature as an eminent indologist was beyond question. Professor A. C. Woolner by proposing his name as a President of the first Oriental Conference observed that a better choice could not have been contemplated. Eminent educationalists like Sir Ashutosha Mukerjee, Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sir John Marshal and other distinguished savants who could not participate in the deliberations of the Conference wished for its success.

In his address Sir R. G. Bhandarkar made certain important observations among which he expressed his desire that efforts should be made by our scholars to see that in the interpretation of Vedas there should not be the monopoly of the European scholars and that we Indians should take an important role in building up a line of approach which would enable us to understand and interpret the deeper meaning of this important branch of Indo-European literature.

According to Professor Weber the literature of India, i.e., the Vedic, passes generally for the most ancient literature of which we possess written record and justly so. This fact may not be disputed by the Egyptian Monumental records and Papyrus Rolls or even by the Assyrian literature which has been brought to light. While the Vedic literature remains as the earliest written record it

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is very significant that the only available running commentary of this literature in its entirety came from the pen of that versatile Vedic scholar, Sāyaṇācārya, who lived in the latter half of the 15th century. The commentary takes note of each and every word of the hymns and it mentions also their association with and application to particular sacrifices. It also discusses the etymology of difficult expressions and settles their accents whenever required. Without casting any reflection on the quality of the interpretations of Sāyaṇa about whose master-mindedness there could hardly be any doubt in our mind, this fact cannot be overlooked that thousands of years intervened between the composition of the Vedic texts and the writing of the commentary. The tradition was undoubtedly handed down to posterity but when the commentator himself is found to hesitate about the exact meaning of a particular word or passage we are led to presume that the tradition did not come down to him in its pristine form.

But, when European scholars grew interested in the study of the Vedic lore but found that the dialect in which it was composed was very much different from classical Sanskrit with which they were familiar and that the thoughts contained therein were far remote from those with which they were acquainted, they had no other alternative but to fall back upon this commentary and remain satisfied with what the commentator tried to make out. It may be observed in passing that Professor H. H. Wilson brought out his complete translation of R̥gveda in 1850 in which he followed Sāyaṇa faithfully. Once this translation was presented before the academic world scholars found an opportunity of focussing their attention on the original texts and in

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course of their study they could discover that where the text appeared to be of a dubious character Sāyaṇa appeared to have offered alternative explanations. Professor Roth, therefore, started a new line of interpretation of the Vedic texts as he did not feel satisfied with what was till then believed to be the traditional interpretation. He was hardly convinced that Sāyaṇa was acquainted with the 'real spirit' in which the Vedas were composed thousands of years ago.

In this context it may be mentioned that an earlier Indian scholar, Yāska, who has explained a good number of Vedic verses, states that there are some important discrepancies that prevailed among older exponents and that quite a number of schools of interpretation flourished before him. In fact, he mentions no fewer than seventeen predecessors whose interpretations are found conflicting with one another. Even admitting that Yāska is much nearer to Vedas than Sāyaṇa and is consequently more fortunate with all the appliances at his command to get at the tradition and interpret the texts more precisely, it remains to be said that the need for the discovery of a more convenient method of interpretation was seriously felt. It was, therefore, a great day for European scholars when Professor Roth in collaboration with Bothlingk brought out the memorable Sanskrit dictionary in which the meaning of single words was noticed. This, it must be remembered, should be regarded as the very foundation of the scientific interpretation. But while we cannot underestimate the value of the scientific spirit in which Professor Roth attempted to interpret Vedic texts, we can hardly excuse him when he declared that a qualified European was better able to

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arrive at the true meaning of the Ṛgveda than a Brāhmaṇa interpreter.

It should not be forgotten at any cost that the Vedic literature is the utterance of a band of people gifted with rare intuitive insight. It is not, therefore, commendable to divorce the traditional interpretation as fettered by theological bias. As for the comparative method of which the learned Professor is so very eloquent, all that could be said is that the method has its intrinsic merits as well as unpardonable shortcomings. It has to be admitted that the interpretation of the Vedic texts reflecting the culture of the ancient Indian people should be attempted with the assistance of the Purāṇas and the Itihāsas which are believed to have unfolded the deeper meaning of the Vedic texts. It is true that a comparative study is expected to throw light on the difficult and abstruse passages that baffle our power of understanding, but one has to be careful enough to examine critically the context of the relevant points which are to be utilized for the purpose of comparison, otherwise, the conclusions deduced from such comparison are bound to be unproductive.

What we mean is this: The different cultures with which Vedic culture is compared by European scholars are all alien and later than the latter. Under the circumstances it is not likely that a comparative study will help us determining the correct interpretation of any difficult Vedic text. We all believe that Indian culture has a running history of its own since earliest times and it is only required of us to understand the underlying spirit of the same from a

study of the literature of our country from ancient times through the ages, i.e., the Vedas, the Purāṇas and the Itihāsas. For those scholars who are yet to be acquainted with the spirit of our culture, it would be futile on their part to try to understand and evaluate Vedic culture with the help of the comparative method only. It must be remembered, however, that from what has been said above one should not presume that we are disowning the value of the comparative method in general, as this method has its own merits which can hardly be questioned.

In this context it needs to be mentioned that there are conflicting views among scholars on the nature and spirit of the Vedas in general and the Ṛgveda in particular. Accordingly, it is only natural that the character of interpretation may vary. Professor Roth thinks that the Ṛgveda possesses a monotheism, vague and primitive. Bergaigne holds that the hymns of the Ṛgveda are all allegorical. Sāyaṇa adopts the naturalistic interpretation of Vedic gods. He is sometimes found to interpret the hymns in the spirit of the later Brahminic religion. Śrī Aravinda, the Yogin of Pondichery, believes that the Vedas are replete with hints at secret doctrines and mystic philosophy. In his opinion the gods of the hymns are symbolic of psychological functions. Śrī Dayānanda Sarasvatī, the savant and founder of Ārya-samāja, did not believe that the Vedic texts have any reference to sacrifices. We, on our part, may be permitted to point out that of the two parts of the Vedic literature, the Brāhmaṇa portion is regarded as the explanatory text of the earlier one, namely, the Mantra portion. Of course, neither the Brāhmaṇas nor the Āraṇyakas, not even the Upaniṣads can be described as offering a

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running commentary of the Mantra texts. All that can be said in this context is that we should remember that the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads form an integral part of the Mantra literature and the same spirit flows through all of them. The later works are a continuation and development of the hymns and it can hardly be denied, that traces of thoughts of the Upaniṣads are found in the hymns of the Veda and the thoughts of the Brāhmaṇas. European scholars endeavoured to get at the meaning of the Mantras independently of the rest of the Vedic literature and also the subsequent literature of the Purāṇas, the Mahābhārata and similar works which according to Indian tradition profess to explain the implicit meaning of the Mantra literature. It should be remembered that in the Mantra literature thought is couched in a form of expression that often baffles our ordinary power of understanding the same.

In this context it is worthy noting what Yāska observed : The Veda is a revelation to the illumined minds and the latter in their turn transmitted their revelation to those persons who had not yet been blessed with it. It is clear from this that the Mantras possess some deeper meaning which does not appear to the intellect of the ordinary student. It is quite understandable that the sacerdotal people were convinced that the ultimate good would come to them as a result of the performance of rituals to which they were dedicated. As such, they had little interest and energy to investigate whether there was any deeper import underlying the Mantras. With the discovery of the Vedic literature European scholars endeavoured to find out the meanings of the Mantra texts with the help of the science of comparative philology and indepen-

dently of traditional interpretations. It was a laudable attempt indeed, but it is a fact that they did not find themselves equal to the task.

The meaning of the Vedic text does not lie on the surface; and, as such the traditional view that it has to be discovered with the help of the later Indian literature, the Mahābhārata, the Purāṇas, the voluminous literature on Yoga and Tantra, may have to be accepted without hesitation. A perennial stream of spiritual thinking and speculation has been flowing on through the ages since the dawn of Indian culture and if we are to reach the sources we must have the courage and patience to row back upstream. Indian culture is based on a realization of identity of matter and spirit, of unconscious matter with the consciousness of the spirit. In fact, the cream of Indianism rests on this realization. It is for us to trace the current to its source and satisfy ourselves. The later texts of the Upaniṣads, Yoga-Tantras and Purāṇas are replete with expositions of this central theme and they indicate the way to be followed in the quest of the realization that blessed the ancient seers of Mantras, who by dint of their astute asceticism, steadfast celibacy, unbounded straight-forwardness, never-failing attention, strong self-control and translucent habits became worthy of it.

It needs to be pointed out that the Mantras appeared before the seers as if in a dream and they had not to wait for the selection of expressions to transmit their realizations through a verbal form. The medium through which their realizations expressed themselves followed them in their wake as a matter of course. There was no human effort; and, as such, the expressions are believed

to be unimpeachable and free from defects and inaccuracies. It is intuition (*bodhi*) and not intellect (*buddhi*) that is the basis of the divine realization. Divine realization is not an intellectual phenomenon, but an illumining intuition. It is, therefore, that what was intuitively felt can be fully understood by those who are themselves blessed with the light of intuition. However powerful may be the intellect, the truth can hardly be perceived with its aid. Intuitive illumination and expression coming in its wake are identical. Even when that illumining knowledge called *Pratibhā* or *Paśyanti* assumes grosser and grosser forms of *Madhyamā* and *Vaikhari*, these latter forms also partake of the character of the original and are infallible too. Looked at from this angle of vision the Rgvedic text, viz., *Yāvad brahma viṣṭhitam tāvatī Vāk*, can be satisfactorily explained.

Under the circumstances it is only possible for the enlightened people to understand and appreciate the meaning of the revealed literature of Mantras with the torch of intuitive knowledge. It is now understood why persons gifted with rare intellectual powers alone have been groping in the dark and failing to grasp the purport of hymns to their complete satisfaction. Certainly the hymns are difficult—difficult for those who do not possess intuitive knowledge. The hymns are expressions of light (*jyotiḥ*) for those whom *Vāk* has chosen to be her intimate and beloved ones. The language of gods is the language of light, of illumining intuition. In this sense Mantra literature, and for the matter of that, the entire Veda is spiritual revelation. The spontaneous vibration following in the wake of that wonderful experience must be free from all errors.

The question that arises in this context is this : How are we to reach that state of spiritual realization ? And

what again would be the nature of spiritual exercise that takes us to that height? Veda or knowledge par excellence is the expansion of individual consciousness. To understand this expansion one should observe the strictest celibacy in life. Unless the medium or locus is surified it is not possible to receive and hold the expanded consciousness. Mere intellect unaided by intuition is not competent to unravel the mystery of Mantras. We cannot but admire the untiring efforts of European scholars in the field who have not spared themselves in any way in explaining the text of the Veda, but, the mechanical devices of the intellect have not succeeded in achieving the much-coveted objective. It is intuition that is the fountain-source of the revealed literature of the Veda—unless that is harnessed to unfold the meaning of the Veda, it is hardly possible to get at the secret. Unless the inward eye is opened and the vastness of intuition is brought into play, it is futile to expect that the meaning of the hymns will be brought home to our understanding.

What is required for a proper evaluation of Veda is the fusion of intuition with intellect. And, this fusion also needs to be reinforced. The light of intuition coupled with efficiency of judgement springing from a first hand acquaintance with historical evolution is the desirable requisite for a proper interpretation of the Vedic lore. It should be noted, therefore, that the language of Mantras should not be held responsible for our inability to fix their meaning. With the emergence of the flash of intuition (*bodhi*) and the consequent ascent of our individual consciousness to a higher plane of expanded consciousness, the import of Vedic text will be clearly understood.

In his *Anukramanikā* to RV, Kātyāyana says that the Sun is the only one deity in the eyes of the Vedic

seer. As such, an attainment of mystic participation with the Sun is his life's ambition. It is needless to point out that Vedic sacrifices in most cases have their basis in meditation on this participation with the solar god. In one of the hymns of the *Vājasaneyā-saṁhitā*, "He who is that *Puruṣa*—He is myself," an eagerness for such participation has found a most wonderful expression. The same note of participation rings in all those texts of Upaniṣads too, which speak of the identity of the individual soul with the Absolute. Of course, there is one important point of difference between the two cases. Thus, while in Upaniṣads attention is focussed on identities internal, the *Saṁhitā* texts fix their gaze on objects external. Technically while one is a case of inward absorption, the other is one of outward vision.

Let us explain the point in some detail. A Semitic god is consciousness only—it is something beyond matter. But, with the Vedic seer God engulfs both matter and consciousness. This means that the Vedic seer does not find any contradiction between matter and consciousness. He believes that one may be both: of matter and beyond matter, immanent in the universe and transcending the universe. It is for this reason that there is something more in the Vedic conception of God and his creation of the world than what is contained in the Semitic thinking. According to the latter conception, God is the creator of the world, but, he creates it from outside—he does not enter into the objects he creates. But, the Vedic God himself becomes the world, and he is still there and not exhausted in the process of evolution. It is described in the *Puruṣa*-hymn of RV that He envelopes this world on all sides and yet extends beyond. To this the European scholars

have given the name of pantheism. It may be noted in passing that the doctrine of Vedic godhood is not pantheism only, but, something in addition. God has become all—but, He is still there—He is not lost in the process of evolution. So, He may be looked upon as the very foundation of the world—He is immanent in creation; yet, He may not ultimately be so conceived for He transcends it as well.

Here arises a most striking issue. If God be all, how is it that he can be perceived by the internal sense only and not by the external senses also? The brightest object that is perceived every morning on the eastern horizon with the ocular sense is an expression of His—in fact, the Sun is God. And, the meridian Sun shining dazzlingly in the blue firmament high above, is His most powerful expression. He has become the Sun and for us the Sun is the soul of all, movable and immovable. When we see the Sun, we see Him. The Sun is not a lifeless physical body. The Sun is a spiritual identity. He is Viṣṇu who covers the whole world with His three steps. The Sun is *Puruṣa* and *Puruṣa* is Himself. Similarly, whatever we see with our eyes is He—we see the great (*Brahman*) in every object—we feel His pulse everywhere. This earth, this air, this sky, all are His expressions. All are great because He is so and all of them are He Himself. They are also illumining consciousness because He is such. The earth, the atmosphere and the heaven are all gods, all luminous consciousness. And we see them with our naked eyes. This is the Vedic conception of spiritual perception. This should not, therefore, be confounded with what the European scholars understand by animism, though it needs to be mentioned that mystic participation

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implied by animism has found its clearest and most sublime expression in the Vedic conception of spiritual perception noticed above.

Why should not the Sun be conceived as a physical body only—a lifeless material object? The answer is that it is not so because it arouses our understanding in a manner enabling us to achieve participation with him. Modern science looks upon this world as a play of the supersensual power—what is called the world is only an expression of this power. What is power or *śakti* outwardly is life or *prāṇa* inwardly. Becoming and growth are direct proofs of that power. And, may we suggest that the phenomenon of our becoming great is only a spiritual expression of that power. It is through the medium of something external that power assumes a spiritual character—that external something may be called matter.

But, judged from the point of view just explained we think that there is no justification whatsoever for distinguishing between matter and spirit. We may call both by the name of *Aditi*, the mother of all gods, the one Great Power. All gods are born of this Great Power. Of them the Sun is as much visible to the external sense as to the internal one. What is, therefore, light outside is consciousness within. But, our internal consciousness shines only when it is awakened by the light outside which is the Sun. So, we all pray that our internal consciousness may become great and illumining, and, we worship the Sun with that end in view. This, the Sun, is the spiritual mirror that reflects the resplendent expansion of individual consciousness. It is this Sun from which we feel the

pulse of life—we are awakened to an illumining consciousness. The Sun, therefore, is not any physical object that gives us heat; he inspires our consciousness. *Sakti* when it manifests itself as heat is matter; but, when it expresses itself as life and consciousness, it is spirit. The Sun is the centre of the universe. If the individual soul can be identified with this centre, he may become the lord of the universe. Now, the question remains : how is this identity to be achieved ? One is to discover one's individual consciousness that lies hidden within, in the physical or phenomenal sun and expand the same till one becomes aware of a participation with Supreme Consciousness. This is the central theme of the Vedic doctrine of Spiritual Perception.

Let us now deal with Vedic symbolism arising in the context of this doctrine. One must not be dogmatic in one's assertion that the purport of Vedic hymns is only *Niḥśreyas*, the unquestionable ultimate good. Obviously, some hymns aim also at *Preyas*, material prosperity. But, it can never be maintained that all hymns describe the temporal good and not *Niḥśreyas*, the ultimate good. Truth to speak, the language of the Veda is difficult; and, this is so because Vedic seers sought to convey some deeper meaning through this medium. Underlying the meaning at the surface there is some ultimate meaning which is intended. Everyone is not competent to understand the deeper implication with a kind of tentative meaning as he has not the passport to enter into the realm of this secret knowledge. The question of fitness has been raised and discussed in detail in later Sanskrit literature, particularly in works on Yoga, Tantra and different branches of philosophy. It is, therefore, that an intelligent person does not rest satisfied with word-for-

word paraphrase of the texts of the hymns. He tries to explore the hidden truth (*tattvārtha*) with the light of the Upaniṣads, Yoga, Tantra and the Mahābhārata.

We may propose to understand this point in some detail. There are three planes of knowledge: phenomenal, psychical and spiritual. We open our eyes and we see the light. This perception of the light is phenomenal (*ādhibhautika*). The perception is followed by a clarity and freshness of the mind that enables us to feel as though the light outside, that is, the phenomenal light, lights a light within. This second light is psychical (*ādhyātmika*). There is a correspondence between these two lights, *ādhibhautika* (phenomenal) and *ādhyātmika* (psychical). When an emphasis is laid on the second light of knowledge (*ādhyātmika*) that arises out of sense-object-contact and turns the mind inward, our consciousness is inspired, reinforced and expanded. This means that on this occasion there appears a pervading consciousness, a third light which is called god and this is spiritual knowledge (*ādhidāivika*), the knowledge of god. The phenomenal light without is perceived giving rise to the psychical light within and with the mind absorbed therein a third light is felt in which the other two lights are comprehended and collected. Contact with nature and natural phenomena inspires a poet and when this psychic consciousness is transcended and raised to spiritual consciousness he becomes identified with god. So, a Vedic seer is called *kavi* and the god whom he visualises and with whom he becomes identified is also called *kavi*. The entire Vedic literature of hymns is the verbal embodiment of such poetic consciousness.

Here one notices that the psychical has been uplifted to the plane of the spiritual and this has been

achieved through the language of the phenomenal. One sees the sun rise in the morning sky. This is, therefore, a most wonderful conscious expression of the divine light: He is looking on us. But, the eyes with which he is looking are the eyes of Mitra, of Varuṇa, of the Fire or Consciousness burning within. And, those eyes are not looking on us alone. Gradually they are looking on every object in the three worlds of the earth, air and heaven. The moment one realises this, the heart is satiated and one declares that the Sun is the soul of all. Thus, in the beginning we see the phenomenal; next comes the psychical, and, finally, the spiritual. Is this animism? Evidently it is not so. At least we are not acquainted with this kind of naturalism.

This idea has penetrated into the Upaniṣads where it has found a most comprehensive expression. The *Ātman* can be seen through these eyes, heard through these ears, touched with this breath, felt with this mind and expressed through this tongue. Our senses are, therefore, the door-keepers at the gate opening out the vista of spiritual experiences. The monism of Vedānta takes its root here. We find in many places in the Upaniṣads that the phenomenal symbol has been explained in a two-fold manner—this is psychical (*idam ādhyātmikam*) and this is spiritual (*idam ādhidaivikam*). What does this mean? What is there in the phenomenal world outside is there within. And, it is spiritual as well. What is apprehended as an external reality can also be known as a piece of knowledge through intuition.

Before I conclude, I must record my gratitude to all those scholars of my country and abroad who have been inspired by my work 'The Philosophy of Word

and Meaning' published from Calcutta in 1959 and have taken interest in the study of the perennial problem of word and meaning from different angles of vision. I tried to rediscover and reconstruct an abstruse system of thought which fell into desuetude even in the land of its birth long long ago and I am happy to see that the text of Bhartṛhari has been studied, interpreted and translated in the different corners of the globe during the past years. Quite a number of seminars on Bhartṛhari and his philosophy have also been arranged and scholars have participated in those deliberations. To-day I propose to end with a new topic in this field to which I have devoted my attention in recent years.

Bhaṭṭoji Dikṣita in his Śabdakaustubha said : 'In his quest of a cowrie the grammarian-philosopher has verily discovered a priceless gem.' The nature of the Supreme Reality, according to Bhartṛhari was discussed by me in the opening chapter of my work. According to Bhartṛhari the Ultimate Reality, which transcends all descriptions, is indicated by the correlative pronouns *Yat* and *Tat*, is in the nature of word (*śabda-tattva*). To be strictly precise, Bhartṛhari has not used the word, *Śabdabrahman*, to refer to the Ultimate Reality, though he has often been described by later-day scholars as *Śabdabrahmavādin* and his philosophy has been mentioned as *Śabdabrahmavāda*. According to Bhartṛhari the Indescribable One, i. e., the Ultimate Reality, is a principle which is both beginningless and endless, which is *Brahman*, *Śabda* and *Akṣara*. Now, the R̥gveda describes *Brahman* as conterminus with *Vāk*, the two forming, as it were, an inseparable couple, or, to be more precise, *Brahman* is identified with *Vāk*, i. e., *Śabda*.

This Vedic tradition, namely, the identity of *Brahman* with *Vāk*, has found its most eloquent expression in the opening stanza of the *Brahmakāṇḍa* of the *Vākyapadīya*. According to him the Supreme One is *Brahman* and *Vāk*. There is a hymn in the *Ṛgveda* addressed to *Vāk* where the goddess is described as one endowed with great powers. The identification of *Brahman* with *Vāk* is intended to suggest that the Ultimate Reality is power. Freedom to act is only natural to the Eternal Verbum. This *Vāk* as *Śakti* or the Supreme Power is none other than *Kālaśakti* described as *svātantrya* which forms very essence of the Ultimate Principle and is identical with it. The Supreme Power (*Śabda* or *Vāk*) is as real as the Powerful (*Brahman*). The Supreme Power and other Powers (*Kāla*) in the philosophy of Bhartṛhari have no independent being apart from the Absolute Word and each member of the plurality partakes of the character of the Word as the powers are inherent in and identical with the Absolute.

Bhartṛhari has described this Ultimate Reality as the Great Word-Bull (*Śabda-vṛṣabha*) with which the individual soul should seek mystical participation. For this mystical participation he uses the word *Sāyujya*. The individual soul also is an expression of the Eternal Verbum and the summum bonum of human life is to reach the state of the mystical participation with the Absolute. It is, therefore, very clear that *Śabda* in Bhartṛhari's philosophy is *Brahman* or *Caitanya* or Consciousness. So, when some Śruti texts describe the Ultimate Reality as a *śabda* the meaning of *śabda* in that expression is word gross or subtle. The Absolute Word transcends all immanent

forms of expression—gross or subtle. In Bhartṛhari's philosophy Word is Absolute Consciousness. One who is blessed with the vision of this consciousness is privileged to attain both the highest *preyas* and *śreyas*, i. e., both *Abhyudaya* and *Niḥśreyas*.

The means for the realization of the Supreme Reality, as Bhartṛhari opines, is to be found in the Vedas in which the image of the highest Self is reflected. The study of the Vedas is a necessary medium for the attainment of the Highest Realization. The study of the Vedas, however, is to be prosecuted on the line of what he describes as *Śabdayoga*, a spiritual exercise. It is an inward movement of the vital breath from the state of *Vaikhari* through *Madhyamā* culminating in *Paśyanti*—the evershining One. The evershining One is *Śabda-caitanya*—Word-consciousness. For the grammarian-philosopher *Apavarga* or *Mokṣa* is to be reached through *Śabda-Yoga* and for him nothing exists beyond that. The *Śabda-Yoga* is based on the principle of withdrawal of *Krama* or sequence in a graduated order. Sequence has to be understood as the work of nescience and this is possible only when the spiritual aspirant takes to *Śabda-Yoga* and sets himself on a journey that takes him within. There is sequence in *Vaikhari*, there is sequence in *Madhyamā* too, but when one reaches *Paśyanti* he transcends the plane of sequence.

In conclusion, let us state the process of meditation and its culmination in the vision of the Truth and final reunion with it so poetically described in that famous stanza of the Ṛgveda: *Maho devo martyān āviveśa*. The spiritual aspirant reaches the Essence of Speech—the pure luminous Eternal Verbum, which lies beyond the vital plane (*prāṇavṛttim atikrānte*) by

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withdrawing his mind from external nature (*ātmānaṁ saṁhr̥tya*) and fixing it up on his eternal nature (*ātmani*). This entails the dissolution of temporal sequence of thought-activity (*krama-saṁhāra-yogena*). The purification of the Verbum results from this and the aspirant enters into it having severed all his ties with the material objective plane. This leads him to the attainment of the internal light and he becomes identical with the undying and undecaying Spirit, the Word-Absolute. Evidently such a conception of the individual self as being merged with the Word-Soul, of the unification of the individual consciousness with the Supreme Consciousness is capable of one interpretation, viz., the individual has essential identity with the Absolute beyond which and besides which nothing exists.

And, surely this is monism *in excelsis*.

Let me conclude this address of mine with a request to this august assembly that the erudite scholars present here will deliberate on the various academic subjects in their respective fields of study and set up a pattern of symposium which will be of lasting value to posterity. We are aware of unrest in almost all the corners of the globe in present times. Men with experience in the domain of politics and social sciences and different branches of technology are leaving no stone unturned to maintain peace and discipline among the common people. And, I presume that scholars who have dedicated their lives to education in various branches of oriental studies will have to justify their honesty and earnestness by such useful contributions that will bring humanity to one universal brotherhood:

BHAVATU VIŚVAM EKANĪDAM

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XXXI

All-India Oriental Conference
Jaipur

29-31 October, 1982

inaugural address



By
Air Chief Marshal (Retd.) O. P. Mehra
Governor of Rajasthan
Chancellor, University of Rajasthan
&
Patron of the Conference

General President of the Conference Dr. Gauri Nath Shastri, Chairman and members of the Organising and Reception Committees of the Oriental Conference, delegates to the Conference and friends :

I am conscious of and grateful for the honour you have bestowed on me by asking me to inaugurate the 31st Session of this very prestigious conference. The event is of significance to us, as Rajasthan as also its premier University—University of Rajasthan—and its capital city, Jaipur are playing host to the Conference. It is my privilege to extend a hearty welcome to ALL the delegates especially those who have travelled long distances and to thank you for holding this Conference at Jaipur. This has given us an opportunity to extend Rajasthan's traditional hospitality to you.

The popular image of Rajasthan is that of a land of the brave and chivalrous who have written its history in letters of gold. It would not be wrong to say that Rajasthan and its people have played a significant role in shaping national history. In the recent past, excavations made in certain parts of the State have revealed the existence of important links with civilisations dating back to 5000 years—possibly earlier than the early Harappan and Mohenjo Daro civilisations—thus entitling Rajasthan to share with some other states the honour and glory that belonged to ancient India. Jaipur, of course, has during its about 250 years of existence contributed significantly to the preservation and revival of Sanskrit studies and such branches of Indology as Astronomy, Astrology and classical dance—the Kathak—as well as classical vocal music.

In the realm of philosophy and religion, Rajasthan's contribution is unique. The poems of Mirabai are a combination of literary grace, psychological insight, moral fervour and mystical heights. She has undoubtedly made a great contribution to the world of scholarship. In living memory her devotionism has rarely, if ever, been excelled. Her complete self-surrender to the will of God, her preparedness to brave any calamity for attaining spiritual union with the Lord and her prayer JYOTI MEN JYOTI MILAY (to merge her light in the Light Universal) are ample proof of the spiritual heights she reached.

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In the recent past Rajasthan's contribution through the works of Pandit Madhusudanji Oza who undertook Vedic research for over two decades is by any standards outstanding. He is credited with authoring a phenomenal number of books :

18 Mahagranthas—over 150 books on NIGAM

6 Mahagranthas—about 100 odd Volumes on AGAMA

The pity is that this gigantic effort has not reached the hands of successive generations as most of it remains unpublished and even the published literature is not easily available.

Pandit Motilal Sharma, a disciple of Pandit Oza, is also credited with dozens of volumes primarily based on the original work of the great master Pandit Madhusudanji. It is a matter of pride for every Indian to know that the work researched by these intellectual giants is instrumental in establishing that what modern scientists are unearthing today even in such exotic fields as Atomic energy and Space, was not unknown to our people in the pre-historic ages. Unfortunately, owing to our ignorance about the contents of our phenomenally rich literature, we have failed to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge that is our heritage. I do hope this situation will not continue endlessly as even now it is not too late to wake up. I also hope that some organisations like yours or the Government at the Centre or the States will take upon themselves to publish the works of Pandit Madhusudan Oza and encourage research to further the work already done by him and others.

Associated with the Oriental Conference are names of some of the most illustrious sons of our country. These savants and other scholars through vision and guidance have steered this conference for over 3 decades and justly earned for it a reputation amongst the leading learned bodies not only nationally but internationally. Its contribution to Oriental and Indological studies has been truly consequential.

Among the ancient civilizations of the world, that of India occupies a pre-eminent position, a distinction in some manner shared with China, in so far as its traditions have been preserved without a break down to the present day. Even on a conservative estimate, this tradition is at least 4,000 years old. That the quintessential elements of such an old tradition should have survived all the vicissitudes of history is in the life of humanity a very remarkable phenomenon. It is a tribute to the perennial character of Indian thought and philosophy.

(3)

The views of Max Muller and Roman Rolland in respect of India and its heritage are pertinent. The former said :

If we were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow—in some parts a very paradise on earth—I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered over the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself, from what literature we have in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly a human life—again I should point to India.

Likewise, Romain Rolland expressed the view that :

If there is one place on the face of the earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India.

Since your legacy and charge are such as would put India on the peak of human glory, this distinguished assembly assumes an importance far above that associated with other concourses of academicians. Whereas the latter reflect the workings—howsoever commendable—of the best Indian brains, your conference represents at its finest the mind and soul of India.

A measure of the immense significance of the present conference is the extent and scope of participation in it. I understand that some 1500 delegates from every nook and corner of the country have registered themselves to take part in it. They represent diverse aspects of Orientalological and Indological studies but more than that they vividly embody and exemplify the rich diversity of our great country, linguistic, cultural, religious and ethnic. Yet, they also symbolize and enshrine in them that sacred unity which is best called 'Indianness'. The conference delegates, therefore, are the best specimens of national integration.

(4)

Growth and development betoken life. It is as true of institutions as of living organisms. It is, therefore, only befitting that the All-India Oriental Conference should have extended its scope over the past 60 years and more to cover a very wide canvas with a view to matching it with the International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and Africa. A mere look at the sections into which the conference is divided is enough to convince anyone of its comprehensive and inclusive scope. The sections are (1) Vedic, (2) Iranian, (3) Classical Sanskrit, (4) Islamic studies, (5) Arabic and Persian, (6) Pali and Buddhism, (7) Prakrit and Jainism, (8) History, (9) Archaeology, (10) Indian Linguistics, (11) Philosophy and Religion, (12) Dravidic Studies, (13) Technical Sciences and Fine Arts, (14) South-East Asian Studies, (15) West Asian Studies, and (16) Local Language, Literature and Culture which means Rajasthani language and literature as also the rich cultural heritage of which we are justly proud.

Collectively these subjects spell history—history in its broadest sense—history of man, his evolving ethos and culture, languages as means of communication between peoples, fine and performing arts and finally religion and philosophy.

The time span of the historian more so of the orientalist has been extended fantastically by the work of pre-historians, geologists, biologists and archaeologists, and the sciences of man and nature yield new insights and riddles concerning the past of man on our planet. The last two decades have witnessed a remarkable shift of interest from Europe—centered history to the past of the peoples and civilizations of Asia, Africa and Latin America.*

The impact of the social sciences has broadened the range of historical materials, enhanced the scientific objectivity of the historian's work, multiplied the tools of investigation, diversified the methods of study, and added new concepts and interdisciplinary possibilities. But the significance of history as a mode of thought and as a comprehensive, synthesizing and unifying system of the science of man has not diminished in any way. As the American historian Page Smith sums up :

History is and must remain pre-eminent among the social sciences, for it is history that brings together the results

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of the inquiries that the various social sciences carry on and shapes them into a comprehensive account related to the course of historic events.*

History as a branch of knowledge concerned with the past of man, his societies and the interactions between them, has the dual burden of subjectivity of interpretation and objectivity of scientific knowledge. The discipline of history, therefore, partakes of both art and science. May I with your permission take the liberty of saying that the Orientalist must follow the scientific method to collect his evidence of establishing facts as they really happened, and conform to the highest standards of objectivity in this search ? He must shed his own preferences and prejudices and try to recreate the past as it actually existed.*

The basic error seems to be to try to understand the past generations without establishing harmony with their way of thinking, values and ideals. Thus, economic interpretation may "illuminate much history" but it does not explain or answer all questions. For instance, Buddha's enlightenment and his message, which had, crossing national borders and geographical barriers, spread far and wide, across seas and continents, like Sun's light, can be understood only by getting in communion with that age.

The poetic element infuses into dry facts and dead skeletons the meaning and throb of life. Beyond the scientific labour and artistic exposition, there may be the contemplative and philosophical effort to relate the patterns of the past to some larger scheme or process in time and reality. This is the historian's vision. Objective truth, subjective interpretation and poetic vision are thus combined in the discipline of history, which affords to the mind an unique form of experience and a most valuable type of training.* An Orientalist, even more than a great historian, combines knowledge with wisdom, realizes the immense value of science and also its limitations and attempts to bring back to life what is dead and gone and could never be experienced directly. He must be a bit of the scientist, artist, poet, archaeologist, a votary of fine and performing arts and a philosopher, all rolled into one.

The task which is set before us today is that the world should get together with a heightened sense of the dignity of man and the brotherhood of peoples. In recent times, the study of Oriental civili-

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zations has accelerated this process. The affinity of many of the European languages with Sanskrit is affirmed. The similarities of European languages and Sanskrit indicate the extent of the agreement reached by different peoples in the matter of economic organisation, religious thought and social structure.

Nearer home we are engaged in a very onerous and desirable task, namely to achieve enduring National Integration. It is vital that we interpret and rightly too our culture in the interest of preserving our national unity. There have always been two ways of looking at national culture, particularly in a country with such astonishing diversity as India, a broad catholic way, and a narrow, parochial way. As a nation our strength has been our ability to absorb, assimilate and synthesize diverse trends and influences. We face certain disaster if we allow sectarian and intolerant ideas to take root in the country. No one has highlighted this point more succinctly and forcefully than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Tracing the beginnings and gradual growth of the composite culture of the Indian people, he remarked :

The origins of this culture may be traced back on the one hand, to the pre-Aryan period, the civilisation of Mohenj-daro etc., and the great Dravidian civilisation. On the other hand, it received a powerful impress from the Aryans who came to India from Central Asia. Subsequently, it was influenced by repeated incursions from the north-west and later by the people who came across the seas from the West. Thus this national culture gradually grew and took shape. It had a remarkable capacity for synthesis and of absorbing new elements. So long as it did so, it was dynamic and living. In later years it lost the dynamic quality and became essentially static which led to weakness in all fields. Throughout India's history we see the two rival and contradictory forces at work—those in favour of synthesis and absorption and those favouring fissiparous tendencies which separate. Today we face the same problem in a different context. There are powerful forces working for unity, not only political but cultural also. There are also forces that disrupt and lay stress on separateness.

The danger against which Pt. Nehru gave a warning is more than real and pressing. There can be no better forum than the All-India Conference of Orientalists to evolve practical measures through pro-

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per interpretation of our cultural heritage whereby the drift towards national disintegration and disunity may be halted. Social evils like casteism, dowry and religious intolerance must be clearly shown to be contrary to all that India stood and stands for. Universally acknowledged virtues like humanism, tolerance, non-violence and universal brotherhood are deeply enshrined in our cultural heritage. They need to be highlighted and re-emphasised more vigorously now than ever before, as disruptive forces in many parts of the country are threatening to destroy the very fabric of our sovereignty and national character. National integration is the key to survival. It has to be achieved, whatever the cost or sacrifice.

The time has come when we should all work for international integration. One international community is the vision that all great people have had for this world. This would become possible not through political arrangements or economic alliances but as the result of understanding of the ethos and culture of peoples. I have every hope that as time goes on people will feel that the whole world is their home and every culture is their heritage. Mankind has a common root split into different branches—communities. It has no option but to strive for the recovery of its basic origin. The history of the new world, one world, promises to be rich in range and majestic in its scope.

Today the world is eager for the development of a world community based on unity and harmony as distinct from unanimity and uniformity. We must learn from other peoples' beliefs and experiences. We have come to realise that conflicts between countries can no more be settled by wars, which are devastating by their very nature and more so in today's context when science and technology have placed weapons of mass destruction in the hands of man. The differences, if any, between sovereign states require to be reconciled through an understanding of human sentiments and their varied expressions. We must learn to be loyal to the concept of one human race. Exclusive loyalty to an individual nation or group or creed is not good for the world.

The human race is one which is becoming a historical fact. The necessities of the historical process are making the world into one. We stand on the threshold of a new era--the era of the single society. Those who are alive to the problems of the future accept the ideal of the oneness of mankind as the guiding principle of their thought and actions.

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The explorers of the art, literature and thought of the world's varied cultures have a more decisive role to play in shaping the minds of the people than even the political leaders. Let them dedicate themselves in the true spirit of scholarship, which knows no frontiers, to the task of building a new world order, free from hatred, intolerance and fanaticism of every variety. Let us, as enjoined by the Rig Veda, move forward to an era where each of us will respect every man, every race, every culture and every creed.

We have to accept the fact that the present-day world feels the need for an integrated philosophy devoid of localism and particularism and capable of meeting the myriad challenges mankind is faced with. And from where else can such a philosophy emanate if not from the accumulated wisdom of the Orient represented by this august body ?

In conclusion I reiterate the advice of Dr. Rajendra Prasad when he inaugurated this conference's session in 1957 :

I would request that in pursuit of knowledge, you will remember that you owe a duty not only to the past but also to the present and to the future and that duty is to interpret the past in such a way, to present it to the present in such a way that the present can derive good things and things of great value. You have to study the past with the same interest and with the same object so that you may be able to help the present, understand it better and make it better.

May the Jaipur session of the All-India Oriental Conference which I have great pleasure in inaugurating, be the harbinger of the message of Universal peace and brotherhood which are vital for suffering humanity.

JAI HIND

*Dr. Prem Kirpal—Presidential Address Punjab History Conference.

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WELCOME ADDRESS



By

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Vice-Chancellor

University of Rajasthan

&

Patron, Local Committee & Reception Committee

Your Excellency, Distinguished Delegates to the Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen :

It gives me great pleasure indeed to extend a most hearty welcome to the delegates and office-bearers of the 31st All-India Oriental Conference, on behalf both of the University of Rajasthan and of my own. The university deems it a privilege to be the host institution for such a distinguished gathering of Orientalists and Indologists, a select group of dedicated scholars, who may truly be regarded as the custodians of all that is best in the four-thousand-year-old heritage of this great land of ours. I would like to offer our respectful salutations to the Acharyas, Pandits, Shastris, Vidvans and others whose presence and participation in this conference will inspire us all.

The State of Rajasthan, as well as the city of Jaipur, have been known for their hospitality and patronage to scholarship and fine arts and even more to vibrant ideas from all over the country. In this respect our local tradition has made significant contributions to the preservation and furtherance of the ancient cultural and scientific heritage of this hoary land of sages and seers. It has been inspired by no narrow chauvinism; on the contrary, its main motivating force has been the noble desire to preserve and perpetuate what by common consent represents one of the finest endeavours of the human spirit to seek both material and spiritual perfection.

The above point is worth making because too often a distorted version of ancient Indian thought and life is presented either out of ignorance or of malice. Nothing can be more wide of the mark than to suggest that ancient India was exclusively

given to unrelieved asceticism and other-worldliness to the total neglect of matters of this world in the here and now. I can do no better than quote at some length one of the best and most discerning foreign writers on India, Professor A. L. Basham, who, talking of the glories of ancient India as a cultural unit, despite its being torn by internecine wars through various periods of history, says:

Yet our overall impression is that in no other part of the ancient world were the relations of man and man, and of man and the state, so fair and humane. In no other early civilization were slaves so few in number, and in no other ancient lawbook are their rights so well protected as in the *Arthashastra*. No other ancient law-giver proclaimed such noble ideals of fair play in battle as did Manu. ... To us the most striking feature of ancient Indian civilization is its humanity. ... the Indian character is neither lethargic nor unhappy ... her people enjoyed life, passionately delighting both in the things of the senses and the things of the spirit. The European student who concentrates on religious texts of a certain type may well gain the impression that ancient India was a land of 'life-negating' ascetics, imposing their gloomy and sterile ideas upon the trusting millions who were their lay followers. The fallacy of this impression is quite evident from the secular literature, sculpture and painting of the time.... India was a cheerful land, whose people, each finding a niche in a complex and slowly evolving social system, reached a higher level of kindness and gentleness in their mutual relationships than any other nation of antiquity.

In all creative periods of Indian history including, of course the ancient, our people took a total and integrated view of life, never compartmentalizing it into mutually contrary parts. Ancient India's contributions in the fields of mathematics, acoustics, metallurgy, physiology and medicine were no less remarkable than those in philosophy, religion and art. It is on

erudite scholars like you that the responsibility of the varied Oriental literature's hermeneutics and exegesis devolves and there can be no doubt that, given your profound learning and sense of dedication, this task will be carried out in a manner that will earn laurels from Orientalists and Indologists both in India and abroad.

As the Patron of the Reception Committee I am painfully aware of our shortcomings and limitations in making your stay here as comfortable as we would have liked to. But counting on your generosity I will seek your indulgence in this matter. I can, however, assure you of our warmth of welcome and deep respect.

With these words I once again extend a most cordial welcome to you and wish you a happy and fruitful stay here.

T.K.N. UNNITHAN
Vice-Chancellor
University of Rajasthan & Patron,
Local Committee & Reception Committee

